



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

1A

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/066,220	11/07/2001	Jason K. Trotter	ITWO:0016	5660
7590	01/13/2006		EXAMINER	
Tait R. Swanson Fletcher, Yoder & Van Someren P.O. Box 692289 Houston, TX 77269-2289			COTTINGHAM, JOHN R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2116	

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/066,220	TROTTER ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	John R. Cottingham	2116

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 May 2005.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 75-98 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 88-94 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 75-87 and 95-98 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Claims 88-94 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species in Figure 12, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on 7/30/02.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 75-87 and 95-98 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Hwang U.S. Patent 5,842,394. Hwang shows all of the claimed subject matter of an automotive linkage in Figures 1-7.

Regarding claim 75, a system, comprising: an automotive linkage (the screwdriver can be used to assemble an automobile and while in use is part of the linkage), comprising: a hollow elongated member 10 having a constant cross-section along the entire length of the hollow elongated member, wherein the constant cross-section comprises a multi-sided interior defining first and second sockets 11 at respective first and second opposite ends of the hollow elongated member; and a first joint member (bottom 20) coupled to the first socket, wherein

the first joint member comprises an attachment portion having a multi-sided perimeter 2 mated with the multi-sided interior of the first socket.

Regarding claim 76, comprising a second joint member (top side) coupled to the second socket 11, wherein the second joint member comprises another attachment portion having another multi-sided perimeter mated with the multi-sided interior of the second socket.

Regarding claim 77, wherein the first and second joints comprise different joint structures. (As seen in Figures 1 and 3)

Regarding claim 78, wherein the first and second joints comprise the same attachment portion. (see Figure 1)

Regarding claim 79, wherein the first joint member is selected from a plurality of different joint members having the same attachment portion. (see Figure 3)

Regarding claim 80, wherein the first joint member comprises a ball joint (top joint 20 in Figure 1, has a round tip and meets the limitation of a ball joint)

Regarding claim 81, wherein the multi-sided interior is a square 11.

Regarding claim 82, wherein the constant cross-section is a uniformly extruded geometry along the entire length of the hollow elongated member.

Regarding claim 83, a system, comprising: an elongated automotive linkage (the screwdriver can be used to assemble an automobile and while in use is part of the linkage) comprising a first end, a second end, and a uniform cross-section from the first end to the second end; and a family of joints 20 each

comprising a modular attachment portion configured to mate with the uniform cross-section at the first or second end of the elongated automotive linkage.

Regarding claim 84, wherein the family of joints comprise a ball joint (point joint on top in Figure 1), or a polygonal receptacle joint, or a circular receptacle joint, or a square receptacle joint, or a hook-shaped joint, or a bushing and grommet joint, or a combination thereof.

Regarding claim 85, wherein the family of joints comprise a plurality of different rotatable joints. (all the attachments are rotatable)

Regarding claim 86, wherein the uniform cross-section comprises a uniform hollow interior. (see Figure 3).

Regarding claim 87, wherein the elongated automotive linkage and the family of joints comprise a family of automotive suspension or steering linkages. (the tool can be used to assemble automotive suspensions and is part of the suspension while in use, and thus meets the claimed limitation.)

Regarding claim 95, a system, comprising: a family of linkage joints 20 having different geometries and joint mechanisms, wherein each of the plurality of linkage joints has a standard attachment portion 21 configured to mate with a uniform lengthwise cross-section of an elongated hollow linkage.

Regarding claim 96, wherein the standard attachment portion comprises a square geometry 21.

Regarding claim 97, wherein the plurality of linkage joints comprise a plurality of different rotatable joint structures. (all the structures are rotatable)

Regarding claim 98, wherein the plurality of linkage joints comprise a plurality of different male and female joint structures. (see Figure 3)

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John R. Cottingham whose telephone number is (571) 272-7079. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday, alternate Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lynne Browne can be reached on (571)272-3670. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



John R. Cottingham
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2116

jrc